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The Sniff-kiss in Ancient India.—By E. WASHBURN HOPKINS,
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THE fact that kissing is unknown to various races has long been recognized. The Mongols, for example, and many Polynesians and Negroes do not kiss, while the Eskimos are said to kiss not as a mark of affection but only as a prophylactic against disease; but the Eskimo kiss is really only an inhalation of breath or a sniff, and the practice of sniffing to insure health is one not confined to savages. Instead of kissing, rubbing noses (called hongi) is the Malay and Polynesian substitute, but among the African Negroes it is customary to show affection by means of a vigorous sniff. Thus Miss Kingsley, in her *Travels in West Africa*, p. 478, records that her especial Negroes even "sniff frequently and powerfully at the body" of a dead relative, and "the young children are brought and held over it, so that they can sniff too."

Other examples of savage custom in this regard have been given by Nyrop in his little book, *The Kiss and its History*, in the last chapter of which he discusses the "Malay kiss," that is the nasal salutation, as described by Darwin, Spencer, and other observers, including the observations of Timkowski, who "writes of a Mongol father that the latter time after time smelt his youngest son's head." On the North-east frontier of India, as noticed in the work of Nyrop and also in the *Things Indian* of William Crooke, people do not kiss but sniff at or smell each other. For example, the Kyoungha of the Assam frontier employ the nose for kissing; they do not say "give me a kiss" but "smell me."¹ Nyrop, however, has nothing to say of India proper, and Balfour's *Cyclopaedia of India*, ii, p. 579, except for a reference to Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, states only that kissing is unknown to several races on the North-western frontier, notably the Karen and Shen races, and to the wild tribes of Arakan in Burma. But Wilson himself brings us a little nearer to the Hindu point of view in stating that smelling for kissing is "still common" in India.

¹ Crooke, op. cit., p. 183.

We may start with the assumption that there was a primeval barbarism to which kissing was unknown, for the reason given by Tylor's friend (*Primitive Culture*, i, p. 63), namely, that if people had ever known so agreeable a practice they could never have forgotten it ; or, if this is not sufficient, the absence of the practice among savages and the cult of kissing among civilized people of the highest class may serve as an indication of the course of development. At any rate, it is this state which is actually represented in the older literature of India. The Vedic poets have no real word for kiss but employ instead a word meaning "sniff" or "smell." Even the complete parallel with the action of animals is recognized in the literature, and we are told that after God made his creatures they suffered and he comforted them, "sniffing at them" as cows or horses sniff at their young.¹ The cow's recognition of its calf by means of smelling is even brought into direct relation with the sniff given to the new-born child by its father. The Domestic Regulations—manuals of family law—prescribe that the father shall "thrice sniff at the head" of the infant, as a cow sniffs at the calf, and this is coupled with the mystic "doctrine of breaths," the idea that sniffing at the child "insures long life," a doctrine that may be found as far back as the age of the *Upanishads*.² Also when returning from a journey a father does not kiss but "sniffs at the head of" his children,³ and in doing so he shall "low like a cow" ; otherwise he shall ignore them altogether ; but whenever he greets them it is with a sniff.⁴

¹ Compare the passages : *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 4. 5. 5. 11 ; 5. 1. 4. 15 ; 13. 5. 1. 16 ; and also 7. 3. 2. 12. Further, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 1. 7 and *Tāṇḍya*, 7. 10. 15. Cattle, it is said, are made to see and recognize by sniffing, *Śat. Brāh.* 4. 5. 8. 5 ; 11. 8. 3. 10. "Smell" and "breathe in" (sniff) are exchangeable terms, the idea being that "one smells by breathing in," *BAU*. 1. 3. 8 ; 3. 2. 2.

² Compare on this point the *Śāṅkh. House-Rules*, 1. 24. 2 ; those of *Āpastamba*, 1. 15. 12 ; *Pāraskara*, 1. 16. 10-16 ; *Āśvalāyana*, 1. 15. 9 ; *Khādira*, 2. 3. 18.

³ *Pārask.* 1. 8. 3 ; *Gobh.* 2. 8. 21-22 ; and *Kāuś. Upanishad*, 2. 11 ("touch" and "sniff at" are here alternate readings).

⁴ The earlier rule is given in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 2. 4. 1. 14 ; *Kāty.* 4. 12. 23 (VS. 3. 41-43). Here no greeting at all is recognized ; but it does not necessarily follow that none is to be given, only that the earlier author did not think it worth while to prescribe a rule.

Even after a real kiss-word appears, which is not till quite late, the word for sniff and presumably the action corresponding to the word is still used, and what is quite strange, both the word for sniff and the word for kiss appear at bottom to mean "touch." In a certain early passage the corpse is said to be carried past the fire so as to be "smelt" by the flame, but an alternative version substitutes "touched" (SB. 12. 5. 1. 13; Jāb. Up. 4; ĀB. 7. 2). And just as the origin of sniff is thus illustrated by its synonym, so the meaning of the later word for kiss, cumb, is shown by its affinity with cup, "move," "touch." Moreover, although the "deadly kiss" of a fair maiden is not unknown to Hindu folklore,¹ it cannot be supposed that kissing was ever regarded as so deadly an operation that the same word was also used in the meaning "kill." Yet this is another meaning assigned to cumb. The explanation is easy enough, however, if it is regarded as a divergent growth from the same radical idea "touch," for words of this signification often take on a grim sense. Thus in Latin, tango is also a synonym of kill and our English Bible has "touch" in Genesis xxvi. 29, "we have not touched thee," in the sense of injure; while "fasten upon," "attack" (attach), and Greek ἄπτομαι all serve as illustrations of the same growth.

It is seldom that the word "smell," "sniff," is found in its original meaning of "touch," so it is important to observe that this meaning may be that of Atharva Veda, 12. 4. 5, where it is associated with the word mouth. As no one smells with the mouth the word may here mean touch, as it probably does also in the Rig Veda 1. 185. 5, "touching the navel of the world." In the former passage, however, "snuff at with the muzzle" may be the sense, if, as is doubtful, the words refer to a cow. But the original meaning is sufficiently established by the connection of this root, ghrā, with the Greek χράω, "scrape," and with Sk. ghars, "rub."

¹ An early illustration of the deadly kiss may be found in Jātaka 93, p. 389: Here a lion who loves a doe dies of licking her poisoned body, balavasinehena tassā sarīraṁ lehitvā, and thus points a moral:

na vissase avissatthe, vissatthe pi na vissase,
vissāsā bhayam anveti sīham va migamātukā,

"One should not trust the one unworthy of trust nor even the one who is trustworthy," etc.

The sniff-kiss is constantly represented as not only a means of recognition but also of delight. We have seen cows and horses compared with men in this regard, but India adds another example, not so familiar to our experience, in the epic description of an elephant exhibiting joy at its master's return by sniffing at his feet (Mbh. 13. 102. 58). That even in this generation people as well as animals are capable of identifying others by their individual odor is well known and it is very likely to this that reference is made by Kālidāsa when he says:

Savvo sagandhesu vissasadi,

“Every man has confidence in those of the same smell.”¹

It is not till the close of the Vedic period, some centuries before our era, that we find any mention of kissing, and even then there is no word to describe the act, only an awkward circumlocution. In a supplement to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (= BAU. 6. 4. 9 and 21), kissing forms part of a love-passage between man and wife, where the situation is quite intimate, and is described as “setting mouth to mouth.” It is important as explaining the circumstances in which a kiss is recognized as *en règle*. The husband at the same time strokes his wife, a point to which we shall return later.

The next situation in which kissing is described presents the picture of a man “drinking the moisture of the lips” of a slave-woman, which certainly implies something more than sniffing at her. It is found in the oldest metrical Dharmasāstra, and the action of a man who thus drinks the moisture (foam) of a slave’s lips is severely reprehended (Manu, 3. 19).

In the great epic of India, however, we have by far the best description of kissing, when a young man thus tells what happened to him the first time a girl embraced him. He was the son of an anchorite and had not enjoyed a young man’s usual privileges, so it was a novelty to him to be embraced, and

¹ Śak. p. 68. This is usually translated “has confidence in his own relatives,” which gives the sense but not exactly, because gandha means smell and never means a relative. Smell is frequently used, as in English “smell of the lamp,” to indicate likeness of a sort, in Sanskrit rather a remote similarity or even so remote as to be only an imitation. Thus one whom we should term a “brother only in name” (not a true brother), the Hindu calls “a brother only in smell,” not as in our ballad poetry “Thou smell of a coward, said Robin Hood,” but implying a negation, a false brother.

he told his father about it, without consciousness of committing an indiscretion, in these words: “(She) set her mouth to my mouth and made a noise and that produced pleasure in me” (*Mahābhārata*, 3. 112. 12). The expression is quaint but the description “set mouth to mouth” is identical with that of the formal description used above and was evidently the best way known at this time of saying “kiss.” This is an argument against the very great antiquity of the Buddhist Birth-stories (*Jātakas*), for in these tales the later word for kiss, *cumb*, is well known. But there is another bit of historical illumination in the usage of the *Jātakas*. It will have been noticed that the sniff-kiss in all the examples hitherto given is an expression of affection between members of the same family, more particularly between parents and children, and that on the other hand mouth-kissing occurs between man and woman only. Men do not kiss each other on the mouth but on the cheek, neck, or forehead, even after the discovery of the mouth-kiss. Even in our day in Southern India kissing is a family ceremony confined to persons of the same sex, as was observed long ago by the Abbé Dubois (chapter xiv). On the other hand, in *Vātsyāyana*’s Love-aphorisms (ii, 3,) where only kissing between the sexes is under consideration, the sniff-kiss is ignored, though every variety of real kisses is treated, even including the double-tongue kiss mentioned by Plautus, *Asin.*, 3. 3, *duplicem ut habeam lingua*.

Now in the Buddhist *Jātakas* not only is the real kiss known but it is exchanged between mother and son. Here however a distinction must be made. The real kiss is given with the mouth, but it may be implanted upon the mouth, head, hand, etc. The Buddhist mother kisses her son, but she kisses him upon the head, and in addition, as the head is the place devoted to the earlier greeting, also “smells his head.”¹

The word *cumb* in its more modern forms, *cum*, *tsum*, and *sum*, has become the regular word for a lip-kiss in Northern

¹ *Jātaka*, No. 532 (p. 328): *sīsaṁ ghāyitvā cumbitvā*, “smelling and kissing the head,” as the mother embraced, *ālingitvā*, her son. In No. 6 (p. 129), *cumb* alone is used (*roditvā sīse cumbitvā*) of a king embracing his son, and “kissing his head.” Here also, No. 266 (p. 339), sniffing alone is used of a horse sniffing affectionately at an ass’s body (*upasam-ghamānō*).

India but is today still united with "licking" as well as with "smelling." In the Lucknow dialect, one says "kissed and licked"; in Bengali, "eat a kiss." The usual North Indian term for kissing is "tasting a kiss," though, as with us, a kiss is also "given," but is quite as often "made" or "tasted."

If we drew the general conclusion that the real (cumb) kiss was unknown in early India and that the sniff (ghrā) kiss gradually gave way to the kiss-as-we-understand-it, we should but put into historical terms the data of Hindu literature. There might however be made one objection to such a conclusion which may be thus formulated. Is it not possible that both methods of salutation were known in antiquity but that only one happened to be registered in the earliest literature? The one thus registered would naturally be that exchanged between relatives, the less emotional sniff rather than the amorous lip-kiss. In reply it may be said that amorous situations are plentiful enough in the early literature, but for all that there is no mention of a real kiss. To be sure, there is a word which some translators, ignorant alike of the history of kissing and the true meaning of the word, render "kiss," but that is only because they see that the situation demands something of the sort and they do not know how else to render it. It never occurs to them that the literal meaning "touch," "lick" "sniff" can apply to an amorous situation, and yet these are the meanings of the words. Sometimes one sniffs at the beloved object and sometimes one licks the object of affection, but neither of these words should be translated "kiss." Nor does "approach" justify the rendering "kiss." A few examples will make these points clear.

In the Rig Veda there is a verse cited in a later Brāhmaṇa. The first is translated by Grassmann and the second by Eggeling, and both render the Vedic text as "the bards kiss him like a child," whereas the word employed in the original not only means "lick" but is the very root of our English "lick," namely rih or lih. In this, as in all similar cases, there is only the licking which shows a cow's affection for her calf or marks the action of the Fire-god as he licks the fuel. That this word is generalised into a word for caress merely shows the lack of a better word for an idea also lacking.

The metaphorical language of the Vedas sometimes obscures this point. For example, in one passage we read that the "young lord of the house repeatedly licks the young woman" and it is not surprising that the shocked translators render this as "kisses his bride." Now bride is quite correct; the "young woman" is a bride, but lick is the proper word for *rih* as here used, since the young lord is no other than the Fire-god and the bride is the oblation poured in sacrifice upon the fire, a perfectly natural word to use in connection with fire licking the oblation. So, not to give more examples of the same sort, in every case where this word is rendered kiss either by the translators or by the lexicons it really means lick and is applied to the tongues of fire, cows, or horses, or to licking the inside of a vessel.¹

The fact that the Vedic bards "caress (lick) with song" must be kept in mind in interpreting such a passage as Rig Veda 1. 186. 7, a very important verse because the word lick is here united with a word which has also suffered the same fate of having a more modern thought read into it. This is the word *nas*, "go to, approach, caress," and because of this last vague meaning often but erroneously rendered as indicating specifically a kiss. On the contrary, the word is used particularly of women going to their husbands, as it is in the present instance, where the obvious meaning is "the songs go to him as wives to their husbands," after it has been stated that "the songs, like cows, lick (caress) the youthful god." But more important is the fact that still another word derived from this *nas* is also to be interpreted in the same way. This is the word *niñs*, which, like others of its ilk, has passed from the meaning "go to" to that of "approach, touch, embrace," and is often given

¹ The passages here referred to are Rig Veda 10. 123. 1; *Śat. Brāh.* 4 2. 1. 10; RV. 1. 140. 9; 1. 146. 2; 10. 45. 4; 10. 79. 3; and especially RV. 10. 4. 4; AV. 11. 9. 15. Compare also *Śat. Brāh.* 6. 7. 3. 2, where the words of the Rig Veda in regard to the fire "licking the earth and sky" are transferred to the rain-god; Rig Veda 10. 162. 4, where licking indicates the caress of an evil spirit; and *ib.* 1. 22. 14, where lick is used as a general word for caress, "caress with song." So in VS. 2. 16; *ŚB.* 1. 8. 3. 14. With the transfer of this word (appropriate to cows) to human affections may be compared the use of the word *vatsalayati*, a causative from the notion of acting like a cow toward the calf (*vatsa*), in the sense of "make yearn after."

the false meaning “kiss,” though “greet” is the nearest approximation to such a sense to be found in the earliest literature. Thus in the Rig Veda 9. 85. 3, the poets are said to “sing to Soma (the god) and greet (surely not “kiss”) the king of the world.” Again, ib. 10. 94. 9, the musical notes of the grind-stones “greet the steeds” of the god who comes to drink the beverage they are preparing. In 10. 76. 2, “the call reaches the sky and touches the earth” is the meaning of a verse absurdly translated “kisses the earth,” as in 10. 92. 2 “greet the fire” and not “kiss the fire” is the true meaning. Of course there are passages where “kiss” is not so absurd a rendering, as in 8. 43. 10, where the ray of light is said to “touch the spoon’s mouth” and may conceivably be thought to kiss it; as conversely, in 1. 144. 1, the spoons themselves “touch the seat of fire,” where also “kiss” is not incongruous. Yet a principle of interpretation which allows in passages of no value a meaning inconsistent with that necessary in passages of great significance, is not one to be relied upon and is in fact a source of error. “Touch” leads to “taste” (as English “taste” means originally “touch”), and “taste” is a later meaning of *niñs*, yet even the native commentator renders the word by “approach” rather than “kiss” in some of the Vedic passages; but, as he is of a later age, he tends to make the same mistake as is made by scholars of today and sometimes reads into the word the later idea. In form, *niñs* is simply a reduplicated *nas* and so etymologically, as was shown above, means no more than “approach,” as has long been recognized by Sanskritists.¹

It is an interesting fact that some English words for “kiss” have parallels, etymological and other, in the modern languages of India. One of these is the good old English “buss” and its learned cousin-word “bass,” which as late as Chaucer appears as “ba,” “Let me ba thy cheke.” Those are the Western representatives of the Persian and Hindustāni words *bûsa* and

¹ Compare Bartholomae, in Kuhn’s *Zeitschrift*, 29, p. 483. In addition to the examples already given, compare Rig Veda 4. 58. 8, “streams of ghee approach the kindling-wood,” where *nas* is translated “kiss” by Grassmann. That the same word should mean caress, fondle, flatter, and kiss is not strange. Greek $\pi\sigma\pi\pi\zeta\omega$ means “applaud” as well as “kiss.”

bôsa, which in the dialects of Northwestern India have gone through similar changes and appear today as bus, bas, bes, bui, bai, and ba.¹

Another coincidence is that on the Northwestern frontier of India the word kuś appears in the sense of the German kuss, our kiss. This I am inclined to refer etymologically to the Sanskrit kuś, which has a variant form kus, and to connect it with our English "hug."

It should cause neither doubt nor surprise that a word meaning hug or embrace eventually becomes equivalent to "kiss." The Greek language offers analogies. Notably is this the case with *προσπτύσσομαι* (*στόμα*). In Homer this word means "welcome" and "address" and "greet" (with a word); then in the

¹ In the form bui this word must be distinguished from bui, "smell," not another case of the sniff-kiss, however, since the latter is a corruption of budh (baode) "perceive." The Latin basium, from which English bass, ba, are derived, is not early Latin, and is probably a soldier's or trader's word brought from the East, rather than, as some have supposed, a word imitative of the sound of kissing. English buss is old German bus (used by Luther) and has been derived tentatively, but too hastily, I think, from a Celtic word for mouth (Johansson in KZ. 36. 355). It is curious that maccha, a Hindu word for kiss, is almost identical with the word for fish, and that the symbol of Love in India has been for a long time a fish, as if there were a play upon a word not easily symbolized in any other way. But it is perhaps more probable that maccha, like English "smack" (a blow or a kiss), is an imitation of sound. Dr. Grierson, the learned editor of the Linguistic Survey of India, in which will be found the forms cited here and below (*Survey of the N. W. Frontier*), has been kind enough to furnish me with two Hindustâni baby-words of the same sort. These are "babbi" and "bukkî," meaning kiss, and apparently used as imitative words.

² In the same way, perhaps, "gaft goft," translated "embraced and kissed," may revert to gava, "hand, hold." It is interesting to see that cumb appears in the border-land vernacular not only as cum but also as cup (transcribed tsum and tsup), as if still preserving its connection with Sk. cup, "touch." As for kuś, it would correspond to Sanskrit kukṣi and kośa, the root appearing in double form, as kuś and as kus (cf. MS. 1. 4. 13 and Nir. 1. 15, cukośa). The Pushto kush-al (cf. kar-al, "doing") has shorter forms, but the word is always differentiated from khashôlî, "merriment," which comes from a different root (compare Horn, *Neu-Pers. Etymol.*, No. 508). The short forms of kush-al will be found scattered through the pages of *Ling. Surv. N.W. Frontier*, pp. 38, 46, 178, 184, 267, 288, 298, 309, 330. Kuś:hug :: kalya:hail, and kuś:hug :: paś:fügen.

drama it is associated with "mouth," and becomes "kiss." We may compare also the use of other Greek words, such as *ἀσπάζομαι*, *προσβολή*, *ἀμφιπίτω*, etc., which are associated with and eventually express kissing. The close approach of the meanings of Greek *φιλεῖν* and Sanskrit *juṣ* is also to be noticed. The latter (German *kiusan*, Latin *gusto*) means, as a middle and causative verb, "take delight in," *liebkosen*, and the Vedic poet says "Delight in our song as a lover delights in his girl," Rig Veda 3. 62. 8 (cf. 52. 3). This brings us close to *φιλεῖν* "love," and *φιλημα* "kiss," but not quite so close as the Rājasthāni equivalent of this very Greek word *φιλημα* brings us, when piár, Hind. *piyár*, containing the root of *φιλημα*, is also "love" and "kiss."¹

Before examining the substitutes for kissing recognized in ancient India, it would be worth while to inquire whether the results thus far gained from our study accord with the evidence found not among savages but among other Aryan peoples. The Romans, of course, had the mouth-kiss, as is shown by the word *osculum*, "little mouth"; but it must be remembered that Roman civilization is comparatively recent as contrasted with that of Greece and India. Kissing on the mouth seemed to the Greeks rather an Oriental custom, and Herodotus says that the Persians thus saluted social equals, while inferiors received a cheek-kiss (Hd. 1, 134). Now among the ancient Greeks of Homer's day there was real kissing; but no case of kissing on the mouth is recorded either in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, although people are spoken of as kissing the hands, knees, shoulders, and eyes.²

As to the method of salutation among the ancient Celts and Germans we know nothing at all,³ so that there is no strong evidence against and some evidence in favor of the theory that the Indo-Europeans were originally without the benefit of kissing, and like so many other savages smelt or sniffed as a sign of

¹ *Ling. Surv. N. W. Frontier*, p. 14.

² It is possible that kissing on the mouth was reserved for amorous passages. No women are kissed at all in Homer's poems; but this latter fact would seem to make the assumption improbable, since amorous passages are not lacking. Prof. Seymour's forthcoming *Homeric Age* gives all the necessary data on this subject.

³ Compare Schrader, *Real-Lexicon*, p. 312.

affection, perhaps with the idea of inhaling the spirit or soul of the beloved, or possibly because, with keener nerves and beastlier joys, it really was a pleasure to smell the object of recognition and affection. That phase of the question must be left to others more familiar with the interpretation of such problems, and they perhaps will also be able to say what is the origin of the true mouth-kiss, whether tasting or biting or licking. Love-bites are frequently referred to in Sanskrit literature. At a late date the Hindu poets refer to kissing of the lips as the drinking of honey. Thus the king in the sixth act of the drama of Śakuntalā, at a time when real kisses were given, says to a bee: "O bee, if thou touchest (kispest) the dear one's lip once drunk in feasts of love by me," and at a still later date "lip-drinking" is a poetical paraphrase for kissing. It is important for the estimation in which kissing was held to remember that on the Hindu stage everything of an unaesthetic sort was strictly forbidden. So no murder may occur in sight of the spectators, and there may not be exhibited any scenes of "scratching or kissing." But, although kisses are not given on the stage, they may yet be referred to, and so the king in the drama just cited speaks of the fact that he did not "kiss her (the heroine's) mouth," using the now familiar word cumb.

In the literature of the middle period, between that of the Vedic age and that of the dramatic period, say about the second or third century B.C., the sniff-kiss is still closely connected with the embrace of affection. "The king, delighted and full of affection, sniffed at his son's head and embraced him," is a passage of the great epic which illustrates this point as well as the following words: "Filled with the greatest affection, Kuntī sniffed at the head of her daughter-in-law, while Krishnā (another female relative) embraced her." Also when two men part they embrace and may sniff at each other, if closely connected; but the more respectful salutation is to bow, circumambulate (to the left), and kiss the feet. Sniffing at the head and embracing is part of a fond mother's farewell. Incidentally it may be observed that besides bowing with the head (either with or without the hands "in lotus-formation" pressed to the brow), the early salutation consists in "bending the knee," a greeting as old as the Vedic age. The right knee is bent by an inferior but important person, the left by a

lowlier one; both knees by the lowliest; and to this was added prostration as a sign of greatest humility; but to the glory of the Aryan be it added that he never prostrated himself, even to his gods, till long after he became a victim to the enervating climate of India. By the time of the epic poetry there was even “the prostration with eight members” in distinction from the less humble “five-membered prostration.”¹

As the examples have shown, the sniff-kiss is preëminently the token of family love and chaste affection given by a friend to a friend of the same sex or by older people to children. Unfamiliar, and even to our minds somewhat disgusting, the pleasure derived therefrom is no matter of theory, as witness such an incidental (and hence the more valuable) statement as this from the great epic:² “Men who have gone to another town rejoice when children (sons) climb to their lap (hip); and they sniff lovingly at their heads.” When the great hero Arjuna greets his beloved son, who has died and been resurrected, he thus embraces and “sniffs at his head.” A typical case may be found in another place, where a king gives permission to his nephews to depart and embraces them. They then get leave of the queen and embrace her feet. Finally their mother sniffs at them and embraces them (this means that she puts her hands about their faces or her arms around their necks), and they again circumambulate the king, being careful to keep the right hand toward him, as a last token of esteem. In the bitterest sorrow, a bereaved widow is represented in epic poetry as sniffing at the corpse of her dead husband, the bereaved mother as sniffing at the body of her son slain in battle, and, exactly like the negroes described by Miss Kingsley, the mourners even sniff at the face of the dead.³

¹ On these points and for an account of the curious crossed-legged kneeling of a king at his inauguration, known as “making a lap,” the following passages should be consulted: *Mahābhārata* 1. 74. 120; *ib.* 221. 21 and 22; *ib.* 14. 53. 2 (52. 30 and 53); *Rāmāyaṇa*, 2. 25. 40; *Śat. Brāh.* 2. 4. 2. 1 and 2; *Āit. Brāh.* 8. 6 and 9; and the *Rig Veda*, 1. 72. 5 and 10. 15. 6.

² *Mahābhārata*, 1. 74. 61.

³ Compare the scenes in the great epic at 14. 80. 56; 15. 36 (to verse 49); and for sniffing at the face, *vaktram upāghrāya*, *ib.* 11. 17. 28; 20. 6. A note on how a child is carried may be of interest. Above I have translated “climb to the lap”; this is literally “to the hip.” But the child is

When Medea parts in despair from her children she exclaims, "O delicate skin and sweetest breath of children." The Hindu, from the earliest times, expresses his appreciation of the touch of the beloved object, whether wife or child. And conversely, not the father's and husband's kiss but his delightful "touch" it is which causes a joy in son and wife so deep as to produce swooning.¹ The touch is actually described as a "taste" and "having a sweet hand-taste," *hattharasa*, describes a woman pleasant to touch (cf. *Jāt.* 34 and 146, *Introd.*). Nor is this all. The "son-touch" gives the greatest joy as part of the process of sniffing at the child's head (*Mbh.* 1. 74. 120); but without sniffing the stroking of one who is loved is spoken of in the same way. Thus in the Introduction to one of the Buddhist Birth-stories (No. 158) two brothers are represented as expressing their joy at meeting again by "stroking each other's hands, feet, and backs." Or let us take another tale from the same collection of stories, which must reflect the normal expression of a real sentiment. In *Jātaka*, No. 281 (p. 395) a king wishes to express his love for his wife who is ill. He neither kisses nor embraces her, but "sits by her couch and strokes her back."

As early as the Rig Veda, "touch" thus expresses caress, not only in the "kindly touching (curative) hand" (10. 60. 12; cf. *ib.* 137. 7), but also in the verse (1. 62. 11): "The songs touch thee as loving wives touch a loving husband," a passage which illustrates as well the "caressing with song" already referred to. So "touch the heart" and "touch him near" are familiar Vedic expressions. They answer to the Latin use of

not always carried so. A little son is held in the lap by father or by mother; one "sets a dear son in one's bosom" (a suckling, of course, "to the breast"); but older children are carried either on the shoulder, or, commonly, on the hip, even when the bearer is a man. In *Jāt.* No. 74 (p. 328), "took their children in their arms" is an erroneous translation of what should have been rendered "by the hand," *hatthesu gahetvā* being like *givāsu gahetvā* "taking (each other) by the neck," in No. 146 (p. 497), the latter expressive of grief; cf. *bālahasta*, and, for references to the carrying of children, *RV.* 10. 69. 10; *BAU.* 6. 4. 24; *VS.* 29. 41; *ŚB.* 6. 8. 2. 3 and *ib.* 9. 2. 3. 50; also (in order) *RV.* 9. 101. 14; *Jāt.* No. 509 (p. 474); No. 196 (p. 127, last line); No. 250, and No. 538, p. 3.

¹ "Touch with affection till one swoons with joy," *Āit. Brāh.* 8. 20; cf. *Śat. Brāh.* 12. 5. 2. 8.

mulceo for blandior in Horace, Carm. 3, 11, 24, puellas Carmine mulces, and as mulceo "maltreat," stands to mulceo, so the same root in Sanskrit means "caress" and "injure," both being derived from the simple notion of touch, as applied for good or for evil. Only in the earliest literature the touch-caress or embrace is not an accompaniment of kissing, as it is later, both expressly and implicitly (as when, in the great epic, 3. 269. 22, it is brought into direct connection with the word "face": "Let no one touch your dear one's lovely face"); but it is associated with "heart" or with "body" only (Rig Veda, 8. 96. 11).

But it must not be supposed that kissing, although so well described in epic verse, is often mentioned there. On the contrary, although amorous scenes of quite unblushing naïveté are by no means infrequent, love-tokens are rarely of this sort. It is not at all probable that the later canons of dramatic propriety obtained for centuries before they were formulated, or that the epic poets anyway felt themselves restrained from indulging in descriptions of osculatory delights. The reason why kissing is so seldom mentioned in love passages is partly historical, partly racial. The historical difference may be expressed thus: a sniff-stage, or a sniff-and-lick-stage, preceded the stage of oseulation. In the latter, the stage represented by the drama, and better still by the later *Gīta Govinda* and other erotic poetry, sniffs are rare and kisses are common. But, at the same time, there was also a geographical distinction which is recognized by the Hindus themselves. For there came at last a time when kissing was reduced to a science and the sniff-kiss was no longer known, or known only to be sniffed at, so to speak. The author of this Hindu *ars amatoria* discusses the kiss in all its bearings and speaks of it as if it were the natural expression of amorous passion. Yet at the same time he recognizes that kissing is not everywhere the custom. "The women who live in the middle district," he says (meaning thereby the country east from what is now Delhi to Allahabad, and south from the Ganges to the Vindhya mountains), "chiefly Aryans, are refined and hate kissing . . . and so do the women of Balkh and of Avanti; whereas the women of Mālava and Abhīra love kisses." So says Vātsyāyana, the author of the native Science of Love; but another author, Suvarṇābha, cited by Vātsyā-

yana, adds the caution that “individual character is more important than popular custom.” Thus we are left to imagine that even some of the more refined Aryan ladies submitted to an occasional kiss.

Nevertheless, racial and geographical differences cannot wholly account for the historical facts presented by the literature in both positive and negative form. First comes the sniff-kiss, the only kind of kiss recognized till a late period, the end of the Vedic age. Then comes the real kiss, and as the latter grows popular the sniff-kiss declines until it finally almost disappears. But we may admit that, as among the Japanese, there were some who did not like to be kissed, and for this reason after kissing was known we occasionally find love passages without any description of kissing. For example, in the great epic, withal in a late section of the poem,¹ there is a very vivid and unabashed scene, where “amplexus atque osculans” would naturally have made part of the description. A distracted woman is here entreating a man to show her some token of affection. “I am very love-lorn for you,” she cries, and “with love she hid him in her arms,” exclaiming, as she embraces him, “embrace me also,” but there is no hint of kissing, though “she had a pleasant hand” (touch) and the “pleasure of her hand” is especially mentioned. Yet this is long after kissing is customary. The explanation may be that given by Vātsyāyana, for the woman here is not only Aryan, she is of the highest Aryan caste.

¹ *Mahābhārata*, 13. 19. 79 ff.